United Nations S/PV.3442

Security Council

Forty-ninth Year

Provisional

3442nd Meeting
Friday, 21 October 1994, 10.50 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir David Hannay	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cárdenas
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Li Zhaoxing
	Czech Republic	Mr. Rovensky
	Djibouti	Mr. Dorani
	France	Mr. Mérimée
	New Zealand	Ms. Wong
	Nigeria	Mr. Gambari
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Pakistan	Mr. Marker
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Rwanda	Mr. Bakuramutsa
	Spain	Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) (S/1994/1167)

94-86776 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) (S/1994/1167)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Liberia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bull (Liberia) took a place at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, document S/1994/1167.

Members also have before them document S/1994/1187, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1994/1174, which contains the text of a letter dated 14 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the text of the Akosombo agreement of 12 September 1994.

The first speaker is the representative of Liberia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. Already midway through your tenure, the Security Council has recorded two notable accomplishments: the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti, with the promise of the restoration of democracy to that country; and thwarting the imminent threat posed to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Kuwait by the massive troop build-up by Iraq. We are therefore assured that your skilful handling of the Council's affairs thus far will yield further positive results.

My delegation expresses its gratitude to Ambassador Yañez Barnuevo of Spain for his excellent stewardship of the Security Council during the month just past.

We welcome the comprehensive and lucid report, in document S/1994/1167 of 14 October 1994 of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). We thank him most sincerely for his continuing search for peace and normalcy in Liberia, which, in spite of the present setbacks, is enabling us Liberians to chart the future peaceful course of our country.

It is indeed saddening that, after five years of a brutish war and the unceasing commendable efforts of the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the international community to end the totally unnecessary carnage and destruction of property in my country, Liberia, peace seems to be a distant goal, if not a pipe dream. We wonder why a once-peaceful and respected founding Member of the United Nations cannot pull itself together and emerge from the throes of war. We ask all of the warlords: What purpose is served by slaughtering innocent civilians, particularly women and children? Who do the warlords hope to govern when more than one third of Liberia's population is living outside the country as refugees, when basic infrastructure is destroyed and when their fellow compatriots are scorned?

We acknowledge that it is a Liberian problem and that if our imperilled nation is to survive, Liberians must reconcile their differences. It must be recorded, however, that forces external to the Liberian conflict continue to aid and abet the warlords through the supply of weapons and other material support. Those forces also provide safe havens for these warlords. Well-meaning Liberians are of the view that once such

underpinnings are removed, those agents of death will be constrained to pursue constructive dialogue and national reconciliation as the better alternative to war. We therefore appeal to those who provide sanctuary and support to the warlords to discontinue such actions.

The ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) has continued to play a most constructive role in the peace process, and we remain grateful to ECOWAS and to the troop-contributing countries for their sacrificial services to Liberia at this stage in our history. The recent attempted *coup d'état* by certain elements of the armed forces of Liberia and the successful foiling of that plot by ECOMOG only accentuate the necessity for the international community to support ECOMOG and also to remain engaged in Liberia until peaceful change is achieved.

My delegation joins the Secretary-General and the Security Council in the appeal for increased financial assistance to the Trust Fund for Liberia to enable ECOMOG to fulfil its mandate. We appeal also for assistance to address the urgent humanitarian needs that have arisen as a result of the recent escalation of fighting in Liberia.

The Liberian National Transitional Government has taken into account the recommendations of the National Conference and is cooperating with President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, current Chairman of ECOWAS, in an effort to advance the peace process. Consultations are being held with leaders of the various factions with the objective of halting the recent upsurge in fighting and reinstituting the cease-fire. The Liberian National Transitional Government, which is composed of representatives from the factions, desires to consolidate control of the entire country, repatriate and resettle refugees and prepare the country for general and presidential elections.

The presence in Liberia of the United Nations Observer Mission is indispensable to the peaceful resolution of the Liberian conflict. In this post-cold-war era, the laudable and pioneering efforts of the United Nations in collaborating with a subregional organization in conflict resolution must not be allowed to fail because of a lack of resolve by the international community. The overwhelming majority of Liberians, the innocent victims of the conflict, are relying on and deserve the goodwill and support of the international community to help end their suffering.

The Security Council has the responsibility to prevent threats to international peace and security. The Liberian conflict has long ceased to be an internal matter. It has heightened the possibility of creating instability in the West African subregion and has repercussions beyond the subregion. Other regions of Africa are similarly distressed. African conflicts, like others, deserve the full attention of the Security Council. Only a policy of empathetic inclusion can propel humankind towards its cherished dream of peace and social progress. Liberia needs that empathy now.

The draft resolution before the Council addresses some of my Government's concerns. I therefore commend it to the Council and request its unanimous adoption.

The President: It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): The political and security situation in Liberia is precarious, and this has been especially true in the past few months. This grim state of affairs, following the escalation of inter- and intra-factional fighting, has not only resulted in a desperate humanitarian situation but has virtually stalled the Liberian peace process. The tenuous situation in Liberia was clearly underscored recently by the unfortunate abduction of United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) personnel and by the attempted *coup d'état*, which, but for the swift and effective intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), would have plunged the country into complete anarchy.

We all face in Liberia a stark choice between, on the one hand, abandonment and despair, and on the other, the wisdom and courage to support a unique regional initiative, the first of its kind, perhaps, in our continent. Will the international community remain lukewarm towards ECOMOG or support this regional effort to head off a crisis capable of threatening peace and security, which the Charter of the United Nations commits all of us - and I mean all of us - to try to prevent?

Unlike in the crises in the Horn of Africa and in Central Africa - Somalia and Rwanda, respectively - where there were no clear-cut regional initiatives, as there is in Liberia, ECOMOG has truly made the difference between a certain order, however precarious, and total chaos. None the less, without adequate international financial and logistical support, ECOMOG's efforts to establish peace in Liberia may soon come to an abrupt end. Yet the international community, unfortunately, has not responded to the repeated appeals of the Secretary-General and the Security Council to make the necessary financial contributions and to provide the kind of logistical support that would enable ECOMOG to carry out its responsibilities in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement and thus accelerate the peace process in Liberia. As the Secretary-General pointed out in a previous report, ECOMOG, with its current financial and logistical base, cannot fully deploy throughout the territory in Liberia.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its strong belief that the best way forward and the most helpful action that could be taken by the international community for Liberia would be to provide the much-needed support that would enable ECOMOG, both original and expanded, to carry out the mandate contained in the Cotonou Agreement. ECOMOG must be enabled to execute its mandate of encamping, disarming and demobilizing the Liberian factions so that the remaining processes leading to the holding of democratic elections in Liberia can be achieved.

At this point in the evolution of the peace process, the Liberia factions, who alone must bear full responsibility for its continuing lack of progress, should be made to realize the futility of further intransigence and the necessity to opt for dialogue and peace, and to do so soon. The patience of the leaders of the subregion and of the international community as a whole is almost completely exhausted. In this connection, Nigeria believes that the best chance of moving the peace process forward lies in finding new ways of making the existing Cotonou Agreement work rather than in arguing about yet another problematic accord or agreement.

Having made all those observations, however, my delegation will vote in favour of the present draft resolution for four main reasons.

First, the draft resolution extends the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a three-month period, an action which is a sign that despite frustration and the lack of sufficient progress in the Liberian peace process, the international community is prepared to continue to assist Liberians until peace is achieved. We therefore hope and expect that this commitment on the part of the international community will find concrete expression in terms of new financial and logistical support for ECOMOG forces in Liberia.

Secondly, the draft resolution reiterates the call, which this Council has made in previous resolutions, for the full application of an arms embargo on the Liberian warring parties. We feel that the continued violation of the embargo has been largely responsible for fueling the crisis. We commend this provision of the draft resolution.

Thirdly, the draft resolution reiterates the several calls made in the past to all Liberian factions to cease hostilities immediately and to agree to a new timetable for disengagement of forces, disarmament and demobilization, as they have already committed themselves to do under the Cotonou Agreement, which in our opinion is still the most valid framework for peace in Liberia.

The fourth reason why we shall support the draft resolution is that it calls upon Member States to provide support for the peace effort through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia. In this connection it is necessary to mention that several States, including my own, that are contributing troops to the Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) have served notice that without new financial assistance they will seriously consider withdrawing their troops from Liberia. Because of the likely tragic consequences of a general withdrawal of these troops from Liberia at this time and the resulting negative consequences for peace in the country and even throughout the subregion, we sincerely hope that the international community will act to prevent such an eventuality — which is a real possibility.

My delegation has reservations concerning the reduction in the strength of UNOMIL and the setting of new conditions for future augmentation of the UNOMIL presence in Liberia. We feel that it would be wiser to allow the Secretary-General, as we have done in almost every other case, to use his discretion to continue to deploy UNOMIL personnel as and when appropriate.

The President: The Security Council will now proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/1994/1187.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Djibouti, France, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 950 (1994).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): When resolution 911 (1994) was adopted in 21 April 1994, my delegation expressed satisfaction over the encouraging steps taken at the time by the Liberian parties on the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. Today, however, recent events described in the report of the Secretary-General dated 14 October 1994 lead us to recognize the volatility and grave seriousness of the situation in Liberia.

Liberian parties must realize that there is no military alternative that can solve their political differences. Only by means of true political negotiation will the country regain the stability required for the peace process to move forward. Yet some Liberian factions have failed to demonstrate commitment and political will for the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

The leaders of the Liberian parties must realize that their stalemate not only affects their country but also has an adverse impact on the stability of Liberia's neighbours and on that of the entire subregion. Furthermore, the lack of progress on national reconciliation leads to the deterioration of the security situation in the country, the ultimate result of which is an increase in the suffering of the Liberian people.

Although the current prospects for national reconciliation are bleak, political events that have taken place recently may give us some encouragement. We believe that the meeting of the leaders of the warring factions sponsored by the President of Ghana, current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the subsequent Akosombo Agreement, and the Liberian National Conference will have a positive impact on the overall peace process.

While we welcome these developments, we stress the need for the decisions taken to be implemented without delay so that the process of national reconciliation can regain much-needed momentum. Dialogue between the parties must proceed if political accommodation is to be found within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, which continues to be the only framework for peace in Liberia.

In paragraph 3 of the resolution we have just adopted the Council recognizes that circumstances on the ground warranted a reduction of the strength of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). This decision falls entirely within the purview of the Secretary-General's responsibilities. We should not lose sight of the fact that this "temporary measure", as it is described in paragraph 33 of the report of the Secretary-General (S/1994/1167), was adopted in view of the lack of security in some parts of Liberia. It is certainly the Secretary-General's prerogative to take decisions on force strength, provided that they do not violate the authorized level determined by the Security Council.

Since resolution 950 (1994), which we have just adopted, does not provide for a change in the force level or concept of operation of UNOMIL, a decision by the Secretary-General to re-establish the number of UNOMIL military observers should not require specific authorization from the Council. It is our view that the Council should be consistent. It is undeniable that circumstances sometimes require changes or adaptations of mandates in the light of new realities. In this particular case, however, since UNOMIL has not been altered, there should not be a change in the mandate or the concept of the Mission, with the imposition of non-existent conditionalities.

We welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to dispatch a high-level mission to consult with the leadership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with a view to determining how the international community can continue to contribute to ongoing efforts to bring peace and stability to Liberia. We look forward to considering its report and recommendations.

My delegation voted in favour of resolution 950 (1994) because it represents yet another earnest attempt by the international community to contribute to the peace process in Liberia. We are convinced that, despite delays in the national reconciliation process, the Security Council should continue to lend its support to efforts to bring all parties in Liberia together in order to create an

environment conducive to peace and stability in that country.

In conclusion, we would like to congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the very fine job he has been doing. We also wish to recognize the contribution of ECOWAS, in particular its current Chairman, President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, as well as of the ECOMOG troop contributors, which are sparing no efforts to enhance the chances of peace in Liberia.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The political future of Liberia depends on Liberians. Despite the commendable diplomatic efforts to bring the Liberian factions together made by the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ghanaian President Rawlings, which we fully support, there is thus far no peace in Liberia. Despite the commendable efforts of Nigerian, Tanzanian, Ugandan and other forces of the Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of ECOWAS to provide security, Liberia is still engulfed in civil war.

The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was sent in as an observer mission to observe a cease-fire. But the firing has not ceased. Instead, UNOMIL observers have been abused and humiliated by the warlords whose country they came to protect. Humanitarian relief workers came to help. Yet they have been harassed and treated inhumanely.

The Secretary-General was right to pull out two thirds of the UNOMIL observers in Liberia. They should not go back until there is a real cease-fire, assumption of real authority by a transitional Government and a commitment to disarmament by all the factions. In our view, given the precarious situation in Liberia, they should not go back until the Security Council decides to send them back. We note in this regard that the resolution states, in paragraph 3, that:

> "any decision to return [UNOMIL] to the authorized level will depend on consideration by the Security Council of a further report from the Secretary-General reflecting a real improvement in the situation on the ground, in particular the security situation".

We have hope for Liberia. The extension of the mandate of UNOMIL is an expression of our hope. But it is a hope that can only be fulfilled by the determination of the people of Liberia to say "No" to civil war, by a commitment of all Liberians to peace.

Mr. Mérimée (France)(*interpretation from French*): France voted in favour of extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 13 January 1995 and approves the Secretary-General's conclusions set forth in his seventh progress report on UNOMIL. The sending of a high-level mission to consult with States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on redefining the respective roles of UNOMIL and the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia — we approve that proposal of the Secretary-General — as well as the various diplomatic initiatives we may expect by the end of the year justify an extension of UNOMIL's mandate.

However, this extension has been limited to the time deemed necessary finally to secure implementation of a peace process in Liberia. We must not forget that it is in the first instance up to the Liberian parties and that country's people to be the true creators of national reconciliation and to establish a lasting peace. The signing of agreements accepted by all the Liberian factions — the Cotonou Agreement, in particular, but also the Akosombo Agreement, on which the Chairman of ECOWAS has expended much effort — has been encouraging in this respect. However, recent events have shown that much remains to be done.

The parties must truly respect those agreements. The immediate restoration of the cease-fire, the disarming of the factions and institutional changes called for by the agreements will make it possible to envisage a resumption of the electoral process. I would add that human rights must be respected in Liberia, fully and scrupulously.

Otherwise, given the deterioration of the security of personnel of international organizations, especially humanitarian organizations, it will finally no longer be possible for the international community to assist the Liberians in their search for peace within their borders. The extension of the UNOMIL mandate must therefore be a signal to the parties to engage, in good faith and unremittingly, in the peace process in Liberia.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Liberia.

The situation described causes us great concern about the continuation of hostilities. Moreover, the emergence of new factions makes it even more difficult

to implement the necessary agreements and increases the climate of insecurity and instability to which the military observers of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and the personnel of other international organizations working in Liberia are being subjected. This has made it difficult for UNOMIL to discharge its mandate effectively and has necessitated a temporary reduction in its strength.

In view of the prevailing insecurity, we believe it right to extend UNOMIL's mandate until 13 January 1995. The increased insecurity and instability have also led to a 50 per cent reduction in the international staff of relief organizations, which means that the country's considerable humanitarian needs are not being adequately met.

We also view with deep concern the intention expressed by some contributors of troops to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to withdraw their contingents from the Group. We can understand their position, the result of serious supply problems and the lack of any concrete political progress in Liberia. Accordingly, we view as especially timely the Secretary-General's proposal to send a high-level mission to consult with States members of ECOWAS on how the international community can best continue to assist the peace process in Liberia.

Lastly, we would urge all factions in Liberia to come together in order to reach a political solution, and to work jointly for national reconciliation. The success of that common endeavour is the key to their future.

We commend the efforts to restore peace to Liberia being made by the countries contributing troops to UNOMIL and ECOMOG, by humanitarian organizations and by Member States that have contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation is deeply concerned at the complex situation in Liberia and the constant fighting there, which has not only stalled the peace process in that country and led to a severe deterioration in the already difficult humanitarian situation of its people, but has also had a destabilizing influence on the entire subregion.

We find absolutely unacceptable attacks by armed Liberian factions against the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and other international organizations, and we resolutely condemn such actions.

The Russian delegation voted in favour of the resolution adopted today, which provides for the extension of UNOMIL's mandate, because we believe it sends a clear signal to the Liberian factions that the present stagnation of the peace process is unacceptable. It also shows that the Security Council intends to take developments in the situation into account and to adjust its activities accordingly - this assessment will include the question of the United Nations presence in that country - if the contending factions do not take rapid and effective steps towards a peaceful settlement.

We regard it as highly important that the resolution calls upon all States strictly to abide by and comply with the general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Liberia. We are convinced that the Liberian conflict cannot be settled militarily and that a settlement can be reached only through a reactivation of the process of national reconciliation on the basis of existing political agreements. In this connection, we attach particular importance to close coordination of United Nations activities with those of the regional organization, ECOWAS, which we are convinced has far from exhausted the opportunities for normalizing the situation in Liberia and leading that country towards a solid political settlement.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.